



Maryland Department of Disabilities - Press Release

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Event highlights need for employment options for people with disabilities

SALISBURY, MD (August 17, 2005) -- Three Maryland Cabinet Secretaries joined forces today to draw attention to the critical need for more job opportunities for people with disabilities.

"In Maryland, like many other states, we have an incredibly high unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities. When you also consider the people who are grossly underemployed, what you see is a huge waste of potential productivity in the workforce," commented Secretary Kristen Cox of the Maryland Department of Disabilities. "Governor Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. and his administration are committed to changing this situation in Maryland. Already, we have made improvements and will continue to do so under his leadership."

Cox was joined by Secretary Aris Melissaratos of the Maryland Department of Business & Economic Development and Secretary James D. Fielder, Jr., Ph.D., of the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing & Regulation, along with other leaders from state government and non-profit agencies. The group met at K&L Microwave, Inc. in Salisbury, which has committed to hiring individuals with disabilities and making necessary accommodations to help those workers succeed.

"Our company focuses on the individual's abilities and looks for a position that will be a good match," said Robin Hall, Human Resource Manager at K&L Microwave. "We've had a lot of success approaching hiring this way -- concentrating on what people can do, not what they can't do."

Secretary Melissaratos said K&L Microwave, a Dover Company, represents the can-do attitude needed to hire more people with disabilities in competitive work environments. "We are calling on all Maryland businesses to adopt this mind-set and work with us in our efforts to put Marylanders to work. They are ready and willing to take on new challenges, and we are committed to helping successful Maryland businesses of all sizes find reliable, committed employees who will be an asset to their organizations."

During Wednesday's press event, agency heads and guests toured the plant and observed K&L employees successfully working in competitive, integrated jobs. One such employee, Louis Gentile, measures ceramic resonators at the plant. Gentile's obsessive attention to detail makes him a perfect employee for this job, where the margin of error is two-thousandths of an inch, a company spokeswoman said.

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Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor ~ Michael S. Steele, Lt. Governor
Kristen Cox, Secretary ~ Diane McComb, Deputy Secretary